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# A 'top' Soviet spy defects to British

LONDON (AP) — A Soviet diplomat based in Iran has defected to Britain, the British government said. British papers called him a top spymaster, with one saying the defection was the West's "biggest spy scoop for more than 10 years."

The Home Office announced the defection of 35-year-old Vladimir Kuzichkin, a vice consul at the Soviet Embassy in Tehran, Friday night.

A spokesman said the defection was not being treated as a "run-of-the-mill" affair, but he refused to elaborate and made no mention of Kuzichkin being involved in spying.

The Soviet diplomat arrived in Britain "in the last few days" and was granted permission to stay, said the spokesman, who declined to be identified. He said this permission did not amount to political asylum, but refused to say what the distinction was.

"One of Russia's top spymasters has fled from the KGB to England," trumpeted the Daily Mail.

CALLING THE defection the West's "biggest spy scoop for more than 10 years," the tabloid quoted an

unidentified British intelligence officer as saying Kuzichkin was "top of his class in the KGB," the Soviet intelligence and internal security organization.

"His importance to the West is underlined by the fact that American intelligence officers have come to London to question him after he has been debriefed by British intelligence," the paper claimed.

The Daily Mail said Kuzichkin brought with him "a vast dossier on the Soviet espionage network in Western Europe and the Near East — agents, sub-agents, code systems and all."

"He is now at a 'safe house' in Sussex (south of London) where he is revealing his secrets in long sessions with British officers," the paper said.

It said Kuzichkin had asked his wife to make the break with him but she stayed behind in Tehran.

THE RESPECTED London Times quoted sources in the Iranian capital as saying Kuzichkin disappeared from the Soviet Embassy there in June and his car later was found abandoned in a street.

It was unclear where Kuzichkin had been since then.

The Guardian said Kuzichkin's job in Tehran was "said to have been the maintenance of relations with Iran's Tudeh Communist Party," which has been driven underground by the fiercely anti-communist regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of Iran's Islamic fundamentalist government.

Reports said the Soviet Embassy in London was informed of Kuzichkin's arrival in Britain and asked for consular access to him. It was not known if the request was granted.

JUST OVER a decade ago, Britain accused 105 Soviet officials based in London of spying and threw them out. The British said the evidence came from KGB agent Oleg Laylin, who defected and exposed a giant Soviet espionage ring.

Friday's defection revelation in Britain came one day after the United States reported the defection of Andrzej Treumann, a senior Polish banker who had been based in New York.

Reagan administration sources, who declined to be identified, denied a published report that Treumann was a top Polish spy. But they said he still would be able to supply information about Polish intelligence personnel, personalities, targets and operational methods.